

## Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
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AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 PARIS 12700

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: FR, PGOV, PINT  
SUBJECT: THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND ITS MAJORITY: NO  
BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

SUMMARY: AMONG THE MAJOR PARTIES THAT COMPRISE THE  
CURRENT MAJORITY COALITION IN FRANCE, THERE IS A GENERAL  
CONSENSUS THAT, SHORT OF AN UNEXPECTED BOON, LITTLE CAN  
BE DONE TO FORESTALL A LEFT VICTORY IN THE 1978 LEGISLA-  
TIVE ELECTIONS. THEY WILL OF COURSE FIGHT TO THE  
FINISH; BUT THEY ARE SO DIVIDED OVER MAJOR ISSUES AND,  
WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE SMALL CENTRIST GROUP-  
ING, SO DISILLUSIONED WITH GOF POLICY, THAT THEY SEE  
LITTLE HOPE OF A VICTORY. THE RPR BELIEVES THAT GOF IS  
INCAPABLE OF COMING TO GRIPS IN A POLITICAL AND PSYCHO-  
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LOGICAL WAY WITH THE PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, AND  
THAT PRIME MINISTER BARRE IS TOO SINGLE-MINDEDLY OBSESS-  
ED WITH PURELY ECONOMIC MATTERS. BARRE AND RPR LEADER  
CHIRAC, THE TWO MOST DYNAMIC FORCES, ARE VIRTUALLY IN  
OPEN CONFLICT OVER HOW THE CHALLENGE FROM THE LEFT  
SHOULD BE MET. BARRE'S SINGLE-MINDED CONCENTRATION ON  
PURELY ECONOMIC MATTERS RUNS UP AGAINST THE RPR'S WISH

TO GALVANIZE THE MAJORITY ELECTORATE WITH HARD-HITTING SPEECHES AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS MORE DRASTIC THAN THOSE JUST PASSED IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING IS MORE ISOLATED THAN EVER AND THE LEFT RANKS SLOWLY SWELL WITH THOSE SEEKING TO JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON. BOTH MAJORITY AND OPPOSITION POLITICIANS ARE PREPARING FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF EARLY ELECTIONS; AND THE RPR, DESPITE PROTESTS TO THE CONTRARY, IS HOLDING ITSELF IN READINESS TO PICK UP THE PIECES IF -- OR WHEN, AS THEY SEE IT -- THE HOUSE COMES TUMBLING DOWN. THERE IS IN MUCH OF THE MAJORITY ELECTORATE A CURIOSITY, A DESIRE FOR CHANGE. THIS, PERHAPS EVEN MORE THAN UNEMPLOYMENT (EVERYONE'S BUGBEAR) IS WORKING AGAINST WHAT- EVER CHANCES REMAIN FOR THE MAJORITY TO PULL A MIRACLE OUT OF THE HAT. END SUMMARY.

1. SHORTLY AFTER PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S ELECTION TO THE ELYSEE IN MAY 1974, IT BECAME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THAT HE WISHED TO "RE-EQUILIBRATE" THE MAJORITY BY REDUCING THE POWER OF THE GAULLIST PARTY (UDR, NOW RPR). HIS GOAL WAS A VAGUE CENTRIST COALITION COMPRISED OF DISGRUNTLED GAULLISTS, HIS OWN INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN (IR) PARTY, THE CENTER DEMOCRATS, THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS (ALL ALREADY IN THE MAJORITY), ALONG WITH LEFT RADICALS AND MODERATE SOCIALISTS BROUGHT IN FROM THE OPPOSITION TO FILL THE GAP LEFT BY RECALCITRANT GAULLISTS. TIME AND AGAIN IN PUBLIC AND IN PRIVATE HE OUTLINED AND REFINED HIS AIM, ULTIMATELY MAKING IT THE KEYSTONE OF HIS BOOK, "FRENCH DEMOCRACY" (PARIS A-439-76). WITH SUCH A

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MAJORITY HE BELIEVED HE COULD BRING ABOUT A NUMBER OF VITAL -- BUT UNSPECIFIED -- ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS. IN AN IRONIC TWIST OF FATE, IT IS BEGINNING TO APPEAR THAT THE RE-EQUILIBRATION WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER ALL, THOUGH NOT AS PLANNED BY GISCARD. THE GAULLISTS, IN A PERIOD OF DECLINE SINCE THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ARE MAKING THEMSELVES FELT ON THE NATIONAL SCENE ONCE AGAIN.

2. LOOKING AT INTERNAL POLITICS ON THE MAJORITY SIDE, THE ONLY DYNAMIC, INNOVATING FORCES CURRENTLY FUNCTIONING ARE IN PRIME MINISTER BARRE'S OFFICE AT MATIGNON AND JACQUES CHIRAC'S IN THE TOUR MONTPARNASSE. INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN (IR) HIERARCHY IS WEAK, DECIMATED BY RESIGNATIONS AT THE TOP AND BY THE DEFEATS OF MICHEL D'ORNANO, OF SECRETARY GENERAL JACQUES DOMINATI, AND OF ASSEMBLY GROUP LEADER ROGER CHINAUD IN THE PARIS MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS AND THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, BIG LOSERS IN BOTH THE RECENT ELECTION

AND THE CABINET RESHUFFLE, ARE SPLIT BY A CHIRAC TEND-  
ENCY, BY THOSE WHO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GISCARDIANISM AND  
BY THOSE BATTLING EYELASHES AT THE LEFT. THIS PHENOMENON

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(OF AN ECLIPSE OF ALL THE OTHER MAJORITY PARTIES BY THE  
RPR) IS OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE, SINCE IT MEANS THE  
PRESIDENT, EVER MORE ISOLATED, HAS A TREMENDOUSLY REDUCED  
BASE OF POWER, HENCE REDUCED MARGIN IN WHICH TO ACT ON  
INTERNAL AND EVEN TO SOME EXTENT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

3. CHIRAC AND HIS MOVEMENT, AS THEY ADMIT TO EMBOFFS,  
ARE HOLDING THEMSELVES IN RESERVE, DESPITE PUBLIC STATE-  
MENTS TO THE CONTRARY; THUS TALK OF HOPES FOR A NEW  
"GAULLIST STATE" SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE IS ACCURATE.  
FOR THE RPR THE FUTURE HOLDS THREE SIGNIFICANT DATES:

(A) THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, WITH THE

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VERY REAL PROBABILITY OF A UNITED LEFT VICTORY. (MANY NOW BELIEVE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE WELL AHEAD OF MARCH 1978, THE SCHEDULED DATE.)

- (B) A SUBSEQUENT PERIOD OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHAOS AS THE COMMON PROGRAM -- ACCORDING TO RPR PRIVATE FORECASTERS -- WRENCHES ITSELF APART;
- (C) THE RETURN TO POWER AT THE ELYSEE AND MATIGNON OF GAULLIST LEADERS.

NATURALLY THE RPR WOULD PREFER A MAJORITY VICTORY IN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AND WILL STRIVE TO EFFECT SUCH A VICTORY; BUT IT WOULD BE ON CHIRAC'S TERMS, WITH CHIRAC'S MEN, AND THE NEW MAJORITY WOULD, THE RPR HOPES, BE GAULLIST.

4. ON HIS SIDE PRIME MINISTER BARRE'S SINGLE GOAL OF AN IMPROVED ECONOMY MAY BE LAUDABLE, BUT THE RPR WISHES HIM TO OPEN ECONOMIC FAUCETS IN TIME FOR MAJORITY PARLIAMENTARIANS TO REAP BENEFITS IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS. WITH THE RPR GOING SO FAR AS TO LEND SUPPORT TO SUCH ANTI-GOF CAMPAIGNS AS THE STEEL WORKERS' STRIKE IN THE LORRAINE, AND TO VOICE OPENLY ITS LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOF, IT IS THEREFORE QUESTIONABLE WHETHER BARRE'S TWELVE-MONTH PLAN HAS ANY CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING POLITICALLY, THAT IS TO SAY, OF WINNING VOTES FOR THE MAJORITY. CONCERNING BARRE HIMSELF, THERE IS THE CURIOUS DICHOTOMY OF HIS PRESENT STATURE. HAVING ENGAGED HIMSELF AGAINST HIS WILL IN PRE-ELECTION POLITICKING LAST MARCH, HE WAS SOMEWHAT "DIMINISHED" IN ONE RESPECT AS A RESULT OF THE MAJORITY'S DEFEAT. ON THE OTHER HAND THE CABINET RESHUFFLE, COMPRISING AS IT DID THE DEPARTURE AT BARRE'S REQUEST OF A NUMBER OF DIE-HARD GISCARDIANS, AND OTHER HIGHLY POLITICAL FIGURES, CLEARLY

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EVINced THE INCREASED POWERS OF MATIGNON WITH RESPECT TO THOSE OF GISCARD HIMSELF. BARRE IS NOW PAYING THE PRICE FOR THOSE POWERS.

5. AS A RESULT OF THIS SITUATION, OF THE FIVE TOP POLITICIANS IN FRANCE -- VIZ. VGE, BARRE, CHIRAC, PS LEADER

MITTERRAND AND PCF SECRETARY GENERAL MARCHAIS -- ONLY MITTERRAND AND MARCHAIS, FOR REASONS OF REALPOLITIK, ARE DRIVEN MORE TOWARDS THAN AWAY FROM ONE ANOTHER. IN THE CURRENT OPEN NERVE CENTER OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL SCENE, WITH RUMOR THE ORDER OF THE DAY, EVERYONE HAS A REASON TO BEWARE EVERYONE ELSE. CHIRAC HAS A POTENTIAL RIVAL IN BARRE (WHICH PARTIALLY EXPLAINS THE RPR'S COOL RECEPTION OF BOTH THE BARRE PLANS). GISCARD OF COURSE HAS RIVALS ON BOTH HIS LEFT AND RIGHT, AS DOES BARRE. IN EFFECT, THERE IS NO COHESIVE FACTOR IN THE CURRENT MAJORITY ASIDE FROM AN OCCASIONAL FOREIGN POLICY OPERATION LIKE ZAIRE. APART FROM THE ABSTRACT WISH TO WIN IN 1978, THERE IS NO BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS.

6. IN THE SPRING OR FALL SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ANYTHING COULD SUFFICE TO PRECIPITATE A CRISIS. WHILE THE IMF QUESTION HAS BEEN PUT OFF UNTIL AFTER THE MARCH 1978 ELECTIONS, THERE IS TALK OF CHANGING THE VOTING SYSTEM FROM THE AMERICAN-STYLE UNIT SYSTEM CURRENTLY IN PRACTICE TO PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. (NOTE: WITH PASSING TIME IT BECOMES LESS LIKELY THAT THIS MATTER WILL REACH A BOILING POINT, THOUGH CENTRIST AND/OR SOME RI DEPUTIES MAY GO AHEAD WITH PLANS TO RAISE THE SUBJECT IN THE ASSEMBLY THIS SPRING.) THE MATTER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT APPEARS TO BE RESOLVED, BUT ALL MAJOR PARTIES IN FRANCE HAVE LEFT THE DOOR OPEN TO TORPEDO THE UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE ISSUE SHOULD THEY DEEM SUCH AN ACT EXPEDIENT. EVEN THE PCF HAS COME OUT WITH A MORE NUANCED POSITION

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REGARDING THE ELECTION OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS  
THROUGH UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE. MILITARY QUESTIONS ARE FAR  
FROM RESOLVED. TO SUM UP, NEITHER THE RPR, WHICH IS  
BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE AN OPPOSITION PARTY, NOR THE  
EXTANT OPPOSITION, NEED LOOK VERY FAR FOR AN ISSUE.  
GONE IS THE DAY WHEN THE ELYSEE'S PRESTIGE WAS ENOUGH TO  
HOLD TOGETHER A DIVIDED MAJORITY.

7. BARRE HIMSELF IS THE PIVOTAL POINT. HE WILL BE SORELY  
TRIED IN COMING WEEKS BY SOCIAL UNREST IN THE LORRAINE,  
WHERE STEEL WORKERS WHO COULD BE LAID OFF IN THE NEAR  
FUTURE ARE AGITATING, AND BY THE RPR THREAT, GIVEN  
PUBLIC UTTERANCE, THAT THE PARTY WILL NOT NECESSARILY  
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SUPPORT ALL GOF PROPOSALS. ASSEMBLY RPR GROUP LEADER  
CLAUDE LABBE'S STATEMENT AFTER BARRE'S PRESENTATION OF  
HIS PLAN ON APRIL 26 REVEALS THE RPR'S UTTER LACK OF  
CONFIDENCE IN GOF. THERE HAVE EVEN BEEN RUMORS OF A  
RECENT PLAN ON THE PART OF CERTAIN RPR DEPUTIES TO FORCE  
BARRE TO A SHOWDOWN ON THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX LAW, THERE-  
BY PRECIPITATING DOWNFALL OF GOF. IN ALL THIS MOVEMENT  
THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF SEEMS MORE AN OBSERVER THAN A  
PARTICIPANT. FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN IF THE EUROPEAN PARLIA-  
MENT BILL WERE PASSED, IT WOULD BE OF ONLY MODERATE CON-  
CERN TO VOTERS OUTSIDE PARIS, WHO WILL NOT SEE IN THE  
LEGISLATION ANY PARTICULAR VICTORY FOR GISCARD. THESE  
SAME VOTERS HOWEVER, DID SEE IN THE PUTTING ON ICE OF A  
MAJOR SECTION OF THE CAPITAL GAINS LAW JUST MENTIONED,  
A DISTINCT DEFEAT FOR THE PRESIDENT. HIS DEPENDENCY  
ON BARRE, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, IS CONSIDERED A WEAKNESS.

WITNESS THE GAULLISTS, WHO ACCUSED VGE FOR TWO YEARS OF TRYING TO PRESIDENTIALIZE GOF BY DECREASING THE PRIME MINISTER'S POWERS (FORGETTING DE GAULLE), AND WHO NOW ACCUSE HIM OF TRYING TO BRING ABOUT A NEW FOURTH REPUBLIC THROUGH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

8. HANGING LIKE A BLACK CLOUD OVER EVERYTHING, IN THE FOREFRONT OR HINDSCENE OF EVERY DISCUSSION ON CURRENT EVENTS, IS THE UNEMPLOYMENT QUESTION. IT IS ONE OF THE THREE KEY POINTS IN BARRE'S TWELVE-MONTH PLAN; THE RPR IS DRAWING UP A LIST OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS; THE UNIONS GNASH THEIR TEETH; THE LEFT HAS TURNED IT INTO THE NUMBER ONE CAMPAIGN ISSUE FOR 1978. THIS EMBASSY BELIEVES NONETHELESS THAT EVEN SHOULD UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES DROP SOMEWHAT BY THIS COMING WINTER, THE EFFECT ON THE ELECTION OUTCOME WILL BE NEGLIGIBLE. AN ELECTOR WILL NOT VOTE FOR THE MAJORITY SIMPLY BECAUSE, AFTER MONTHS OF SEARCHING, HE FINALLY GETS SOME KIND OF SECOND-RATE JOB, ALL TOO OFTEN ONE ILL-SUITED TO HIS CAPABILITIES. HERE AGAIN MAJORITY THINKING IS DIAMETRI-CONFIDENTIAL

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CALLY OPPOSED:

-- THE RPR, WHOSE SENTIMENTS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER MICHEL DEBRE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WANTS A "PUBLIC SAFETY GOVERNMENT" (GOUVERNEMENT DE SALUT PUBLIC). THE MOVEMENT IS CONVINCED IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO ACT ON THE JOB PROBLEM. IN ADDITION THE MAJORITY AND GOF, FROM THE PM ON DOWN, WOULD USE FEAR TACTICS TO SCARE AS MANY RENEGADE VOTERS AS POSSIBLE BACK INTO THE MAJORITY. MINISTERS WOULD BE POLITICIANS DEALING WITH THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AT HAND IN A "POLITICAL" FASHION, I.E., HITTING HARD AT THE WEAKNESSES IN THE COMMON PROGRAM AND THE UNION OF THE LEFT, AND UNDERTAKING SHORT-TERM MANPOWER PROGRAMS TO CREATE JOBS, OF ANY KIND, EVEN IF THE PROCESS WERE AN INFLATIONARY ONE. (NOTE: SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE RPR WOULD EVEN ATTEMPT TO PUSH BARRE TO RESIGNATION IN ORDER TO INSTALL A NEW GOVERNMENT.)

-- BARRE'S VISION GOES FURTHER. IN EFFECT, THE TWELVE-MONTH PLAN IS ONLY ONE PART OF THE PLAN WITH A CAPITAL P. HE IS THINKING IN TERMS OF A GRADUAL ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT, WITH THE FIRST MAJOR EFFECTS MAKING THEMSELVES FELT IN THE LATTER PART OF 1977, BUT WITH A REAL "RECTIFICATION" FROM THE BASE UP NOT ACHIEVED UNTIL THE END OF 1979. BARRE, WHILE NOT ADVERSE TO SHORT-TERM MEASURES (OF WHICH IN EFFECT HIS JUST-ANNOUNCED TWELVE-MONTH PLAN IS MADE UP), CONSIDERS THEM ONLY SECONDARY TO HIS LONG-RANGE MACRO-ECONOMIC PLAN. BUT

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PRESSURES HAVE NOT EASED. FEELINGS ON THE MATTER ARE  
RUNNING SO HIGH THAT DEBRE REPORTEDLY TOLD BARRE IN  
PRIVATE HE "SHOULD BE SHOT" FOR CLOSING HIS EYES TO  
IMMEDIATE POLITICAL REALITIES AND NAMING A GOVERNMENT  
OF TECHNOCRATS TWELVE MONTHS BEFORE THE MOST IMPORTANT  
ELECTION SINCE 1936.

9. SHOULD CHIRAC AND THE RPR, DESPITE LABBE'S REMARKS  
ABOVE, GIVE THEIR UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT TO BARRE, A  
DOUBTFUL PROPOSITION, THE MAJORITY MIGHT STILL PULL IT  
OUT OF THE FIRE FOR 1978. THE PROBLEM HERE IS THAT THE  
RPR, AS THE ONLY COHESIVE AND DYNAMIC FORCE LEFT IN THE  
MAJORITY, FEELS ITSELF IN A POSITION TO DICTATE TO  
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GOF:

-- RPR POLITICAL DELEGATE YVES GUENA'S "NO, WE SHAN'T SUPPORT THE GOF UNLESS...." AT LES BAUX (PARIS 9990), A SARCASTIC REFERENCE TO GISCARD'S "YES, BUT..."

IN 1969:

-- THE MOVEMENT'S NON-NEGOTIABLE STANCE ON A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ISSUES: THE TAX LAW, IMF AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (NOTE: ASSEMBLY RPR GROUP LEADER LABBE REPORTEDLY TOLD BARRE ON APRIL 22 THAT IF EUROPE AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION WERE INCLUDED IN THE 12-MONTH PLAN, THE RPR WOULD ABSTAIN ON THE VOTE.)

-- THE UNDERLYING ANTIPATHY OF THE RPR TOWARDS GISCARD, WITH THE CONCOMMITANT PHILOSOPHY OF HOLDING ITSELF EVER IN RESERVE, OF BEING MORE HISTORICALLY VALID THAN THE PRESIDENT AND HIS MEN.  
ALL THE ABOVE ARE WORKING AGAINST THE MAJORITY'S CHANCES FOR VICTORY IN 1978.

10. THUS IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT A PHILOSOPHY OF DEFEAT NOW PERMEATES BOTH THE MAJORITY ELECTORATE AND ITS POLITICIANS. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE CURRENT MAJORITY WILL NOT FIGHT TO THE FINISH. BUT WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT THE RPR BELIEVES GISCARD IS READY TO ACCEPT A LEFT VICTORY. THEY BELIEVE HE HAS ATTEMPTED TO PRESIDENTIALIZE THE GOF WITH A FUTURE SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER IN MIND; THEY BELIEVE ONE OF THE REASONS HE IS FLIRTING WITH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IS TO FRACTIONALIZE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WITH THE RESULTANT EFFECT OF INCREASED POWER AT THE ELYSEE. THEY BELIEVE HIS DISLIKE OF CHIRAC IS SO STRONG THAT HE WOULD ALMOST RATHER SEE ANYONE ELSE DOWNSTAGE ON THE POLITICAL SCENE THAN HIS FORMER PRIME MINISTER. AT THIS POINT, WHETHER OR NOT THE ABOVE IS ACCURATE, IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT MOST POLITICIANS, MOST OF THE FRENCH ELECTORATE, MOST CIVIL SERVANTS, AND A LARGE PART OF THE GOF BELIEVE  
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THAT THE LEFT WILL WIN.

11. IN ALL THIS THE LEFT APPEARS IN THE ENVIABLE POSITION OF HAVING MERELY TO SIT TIGHT FOR ANOTHER 10 MONTHS. THE PS BOASTS IT IS READY FOR ELECTIONS RIGHT NOW (THE RPR CLAIMS IT WILL HAVE ITS CANDIDATES IN PLACE IN SIX WEEKS). VIEWED FROM ONE ANGLE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IS LESS A DIVISIVE ISSUE AMONG THE LEFT THAN AMONG THE MAJORITY. LEFT-AFFILIATED UNIONS CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THEIR

TROOPS CALM TO AVOID ANY CHANCE OF A BACKLASH. FINALLY MARCHAIS' RECENT DISPLAY OF "REASONABLENESS" AS REGARDS EUROPE (PARIS 11299) GIVES THE UNITED LEFT ADDED CREDIBILITY AT THIS IMPORTANT TIME. THE VERY EXISTENCE IN THE LEFT OF SHADOW CABINETS AND OUTSPOKEN POLICY ADVISORS APPEARS TO GIVE THE LIE TO THE RIGHT'S OUTMODDED ACCUSATION THAT MITTERRAND AND MARCHAIS DON'T HAVE THE MEN NEEDED TO RUN A GOVERNMENT.

12. DESPITE THE GLOOMY PICTURE PAINTED ABOVE, SOME OBSERVERS (THOUGH THE NUMBER IS DWINDLING) BELIEVE THAT ALL IS NOT LOST. IN THEIR VIEW GOF AND ITS MAJORITY WILL MOVE FROM ISSUE TO ISSUE IN A MORE OR LESS EFFECTIVE IF UNGAINLY FASHION. THE PRESSURE TO HAMMER PROBLEMS OUT WILL INCREASE AS ELECTION TIME APPROACHES. COMPROMISES WILL BE MADE, EVEN ON SUCH A DIVISIVE PROBLEM AS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. THE PRESIDENT, TRUE TO FORM, WILL NOT CALL FOR EARLY ELECTIONS. THE RPR AND GOF WILL REACH A MODUS VIVENDI ON AN APPROACH TO UNEMPLOYMENT, INFLATION, EUROPE, ETC., AND THE ELECTORATE WILL VOTE THE CURRENT MAJORITY BACK IN. AMEMBASSY PARIS RECOGNIZES THESE POSSIBILITIES, BUT FEELS THEY MUST BE VIEWED IN THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE OF SUSPICION, REGRET, RIVALRY, ANGER AND DECEPTION -- ALL OF WHICH, WHILE ENDEMIC TO FRENCH POLITICS, ARE NOW AT

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A PARTICULARLY HEIGHTENED POINT. AND THERE IS, FINALLY, A CERTAIN CURIOSITY IN MUCH OF THE MAJORITY ELECTORATE, A FEELING OF, "WELL, LET'S GET IT OVER WITH. WE CAN'T LIVE WITH THIS KIND OF TENSION FOREVER. LET'S SEE WHAT A LEFT GOVERNMENT IS LIKE." EVEN THE MOST COCKEYED OPTIMIST ADMITS THAT A MAJORITY VICTORY IN THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WOULD BE SLIGHT, SO SLIGHT AS TO RENDER TRULY EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT IMPROBABLE.

13. CONCLUSION: THERE IS EXCITEMENT IN THE AIR, AN ANTICIPATION OF RADICAL CHANGE. YOUNGER MAJORITY DEPUTIES AND HOPEFUL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES GLEEFULLY TALK OF GIVING THE "NEW" MAJORITY A TASTE OF ITS OWN MEDICINE.  
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PCF SECRETARY GENERAL GEORGES MARCHAIS HOLDS OUT HIS HANDS TO FOUR HUNDRED OF FRANCE'S LEADING BUSINESSMEN AND IMPLORES, "GIVE US A CHANCE. FIVE YEARS (THE DURATION OF A DEPUTY'S TERM). IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU'VE GOT, THEN YOU'LL VOTE US OUT." ONE GETS THE FEELING THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME SOME OF THEM ARE HALF-INCLINED TO BELIEVE HIM. THE RPR, AS STATED ABOVE, IS LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE AN OPPOSITION PARTY, WITH ITS SPECIALISTS IN EACH DOMAIN READY TO GIVE THE NEW MINISTERS AS GOOD AS THEY (THE NEW MINISTERS) GAVE WHEN THEY WERE MERELY HIGH-RANKING OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBERS. WHAT ONE CALLS NOW THE "POLITIQUE DU PIRE" (CREATING A CRISIS TO BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO PICK UP THE PIECES) BECOMES IN EFFECT CANNY POLITICS WHEN THOSE ESPOUSING IT MOVE INTO THE OPPOSITION. BARRE IS PLANNING TO RUN FOR AN ASSEMBLY SEAT IN 1978. ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT EDGAR FAURE IS TRYING, FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION, TO BRING LEFT AND RIGHT DEPUTIES TOGETHER. IN ADDITION, HE HAS REESTABLISHED HIS OLD RADICAL TIES TO BETTER HIS CHANCES OF WINNING A SENATE SEAT THIS FALL (AS PROTEC-

TION AGAINST EVENTUALLY LOSING HIS ASSEMBLY SEAT).  
THESE ARE VANES THAT SHOW THE WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977PARIS12700  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Format:** TEL  
**From:** PARIS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t1977044/aaaaadao.tel  
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**Litigation History:**  
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**Message ID:** b99e2aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 12  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 01-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2754952  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND ITS MAJORITY: NO BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS SUMMARY: AMONG THE MAJOR PARTIES THAT COMPRISE THE  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, FR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvkey:** odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/b99e2aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009